REMARKS:

The claims in the application are 3-32.

Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The claims have been amended to eliminate the objections and formal rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, raised in paragraphs 2 and 7 of the Office Action. Concerning the enablement rejection of Claims 11 and 12 under under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, raised in paragraph 5 of the Office Action, it is respectfully pointed out the present application clearly describes measuring tension by load cell 13, e.g., at page 10, lines 1-16 of the specification and illustrated in concomitant Fig. 6 (reference is being made to preferred embodiments of the present invention illustrated in the drawings of the present application). Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted Claims 11 and 12 both find adequate support in the present application in accordance with 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph.

Therefore, the only outstanding issue is the prior art rejection of the claims.

More particularly, Claims 3, 5-10, 13-17 and 29-32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,395,101 to Takimoto et al in paragraph 9 of the Office Action while Claim 4 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as obvious over this reference in paragraph 12 of the Office Action. Claims 15 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,668,128 to Hattori et al in paragraph 10 of the Office Action while Claims 19 and 20

have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as obvious over this reference in paragraph 13 of the Office Action.

However, it is respectfully submitted the invention as recited in all pending claims herein is patentable over this applied art, for the following reasons.

As described throughout the present application, the presently claimed invention improves clamping efficiency of thin rods or fibers, e.g., optical fibers, such as during manufacture by cleaving the requisite fibers or rods. These advantages are explicitly attained by the combination of features recited in the various claims pending herein, notably independent Claim 3, 6, 10, 15 and 29-32.

Takimoto et al do not disclose a guide for receiving the movable clamping member 1c, unlike independent Claims 3 and 29 which recite presence of guide 44 for receiving movable clamping member 22 which can be lifted or pushed out of the guide 44 for removal. The "block" shown in Fig. 15 of Takimoto et al "holding" the other clamping member 2a bears no resemblance to claimed guide 44 in which the first clamping member 22 is both received and removable from by pushing or lifting. Clamping member 2a in Fig. 15 of Takimoto et al is not insertable into or removable from any such similar structure.

Regarding independent Claims 6 and 30, both clamping members 1, 2 in Takimoto et al are movable with respect to the framework, whereas the claimed (second) clamping member 21 is explicitly fixed with respect to a framework 45 of the arrangement. Accordingly, if anything, Takimoto et al explicitly teach away from the invention being claimed in Claims 6 and 30.

Concerning independent Claims 10 and 31, Takimoto et al fail to show longitudinally-movable second clamping means, i.e., clamping means 1 movable in the longitudinal direction of the rod 3 extending between the two clamping locations. Clamping means 9 in Figs. 6 and 15 of Takimoto et al is just shown as positioned upon a drawing stage 10 (column 5, lines 10-11) and not disclosed as being longitudinally-movable.

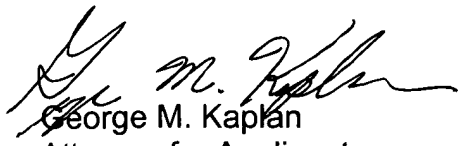
Independent Claims 15 and 32 have both been amended to more specifically define drive means 19, 26, i.e., being mounted to contact the first clamping member 22 at an end opposite the grooved clamp face 23 (Claim 15) or at least one of the clamping members 22, 21 at ends opposite the respective clamp faces 23 (Claim 32) as illustrated, e.g., in the drawings of the present application. Pneumatic drive means 14a, 14b shown in Takimoto et al fail to resemble this claimed structure. Additionally, Hattori et al (also applied against independent Claim 15) fail to disclose moving the V-shaped clamping member 2b towards and away from the flat clamping member 7, unlike recitation found in independent Claim 15.

The remaining art of record has not been applied against the claims and will not be commented upon further at this time.

Accordingly, in view of the forgoing amendment and accompanying remarks , it is respectfully submitted all claims pending herein are in condition for allowance. Please contact the undersigned attorney should there be any questions.

Early favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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